

**§ 90-18.1. Limitations on physician assistants.**

(a) Any person who is licensed under the provisions of G.S. 90-9.3 to perform medical acts, tasks, and functions as an assistant to a physician may use the title "physician assistant". Any other person who uses the title in any form or holds out to be a physician assistant or to be so licensed, shall be deemed to be in violation of this Article.

(b) Physician assistants are authorized to write prescriptions for drugs under the following conditions:

- (1) The North Carolina Medical Board has adopted regulations governing the approval of individual physician assistants to write prescriptions with such limitations as the Board may determine to be in the best interest of patient health and safety.
- (2) The physician assistant holds a current license issued by the Board.
- (3) The North Carolina Medical Board has assigned an identification number to the physician assistant which is shown on the written prescription.
- (4) The supervising physician has provided to the physician assistant written instructions about indications and contraindications for prescribing drugs and a written policy for periodic review by the physician of the drugs prescribed.
- (5) A physician assistant shall personally consult with the supervising physician prior to prescribing a targeted controlled substance as defined in Article 5 of this Chapter when all of the following conditions apply:
  - a. The patient is being treated by a facility that primarily engages in the treatment of pain by prescribing narcotic medications or advertises in any medium for any type of pain management services.
  - b. The therapeutic use of the targeted controlled substance will or is expected to exceed a period of 30 days.

When a targeted controlled substance prescribed in accordance with this subdivision is continuously prescribed to the same patient, the physician assistant shall consult with the supervising physician at least once every 90 days to verify that the prescription remains medically appropriate for the patient.

(c) Physician assistants are authorized to compound and dispense drugs under the following conditions:

- (1) The function is performed under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist.
- (2) Rules and regulations of the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy governing this function are complied with.
- (3) The physician assistant holds a current license issued by the Board.

(d) Physician assistants are authorized to order medications, tests and treatments in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other health facilities under the following conditions:

- (1) The North Carolina Medical Board has adopted regulations governing the approval of individual physician assistants to order medications, tests, and treatments with such limitations as the Board may determine to be in the best interest of patient health and safety.
- (2) The physician assistant holds a current license issued by the Board.
- (3) The supervising physician has provided to the physician assistant written instructions about ordering medications, tests, and treatments, and when appropriate, specific oral or written instructions for an individual patient, with provision for review by the physician of the order within a reasonable time, as determined by the Board, after the medication, test, or treatment is ordered.

- (4) The hospital or other health facility has adopted a written policy, approved by the medical staff after consultation with the nursing administration, about ordering medications, tests, and treatments, including procedures for verification of the physician assistants' orders by nurses and other facility employees and such other procedures as are in the interest of patient health and safety.

(e) Any prescription written by a physician assistant or order given by a physician assistant for medications, tests, or treatments shall be deemed to have been authorized by the physician approved by the Board as the supervisor of the physician assistant and the supervising physician shall be responsible for authorizing the prescription or order.

(e1) Any medical certification completed by a physician assistant for a death certificate shall be deemed to have been authorized by the physician approved by the Board as the supervisor of the physician assistant, and the supervising physician shall be responsible for authorizing the completion of the medical certification.

(f) Any registered nurse or licensed practical nurse who receives an order from a physician assistant for medications, tests, or treatments is authorized to perform that order in the same manner as if it were received from a licensed physician.

(g) Any person who is licensed under G.S. 90-9.3 to perform medical acts, tasks, and functions as an assistant to a physician shall comply with each of the following:

- (1) Maintain a current and active license to practice in this State.
- (2) Maintain an active registration with the Board.
- (3) Have a current Intent to Practice form filed with the Board.

(h) A physician assistant serving active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States is exempt from the requirements of subdivision (g)(3) of this section.

(i) A physician assistant's license shall become inactive any time the holder fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (g) of this section. A physician assistant with an inactive license shall not practice medical acts, tasks, or functions. The Board shall retain jurisdiction over the holder of the inactive license. (1975, c. 627; 1977, c. 904, s. 1; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1194, s. 1; 1995, c. 94, s. 20; 1997-511, s. 5; 2007-346, ss. 24, 25; 2011-183, s. 56; 2011-197, s. 1; 2017-74, s. 4.)